

Support to fair and transparent election process



The Mission's role in the organization of elections was defined by the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement before this competency was transferred to Bosnia and Herzegovina's Central Election Commission in 2002. However, the Mission's work on broader election-related initiatives continues to this day.

Elections are complicated and sensitive processes which merit the highest levels of professionalism and transparency. Further, they

require the strong, effective, and efficient engagement of all in society, including citizens, the judiciary, law enforcement, media, and political authorities.

Guided by the recommendations of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Council of Europe's Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO), the Mission supports the development of amendments to election legislation as well as the introduction of legislation related to political party financing.

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina works with the Central Election Commission (CEC) in order to strengthen the integrity of elections and to expand the technical capacities of the election administration to handle the election process in a transparent manner.

In co-operation with ODIHR, the Mission supports the CEC in identifying bylaws and practices that can be improved as well as by drafting a comprehensive commentary on the election law, including references to ODIHR and GRECO recommendations.

Currently, the Mission is implementing a project that will develop a CEC voter education strategy, support the CEC audit department, increase transparency on election-related complaints, and make the asset declarations of elected officials more accessible.

With the support of the OSCE Mission to BiH and a number of international donors, the Central Election Commission was able to use, for the first time, translucent ballot boxes during the 2018 General Elections. In addition, the Mission organized trainings for all Municipal Election Commission members on the use of the election results reporting platform, and helped make improvements to the CEC's software. The Mission organized a roundtable to bring together all organizations involved in the management of the voter registry, namely the Agency for identification documents, registers and data exchange (IDEEA), CEC, the ministries of interior in both entities and Brčko District, and Municipal Public Record Offices, to update and manage the registry.

Advocating for the implementation of ODIHR recommendations

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) carries out election monitoring in OSCE participating States to assess the extent to which elections respect fundamental freedoms and are characterized by equality, universality, political pluralism, confidence, transparency, and accountability. A long-term, comprehensive, consistent and systematic election observation methodology has become the bedrock of ODIHR's credibility in this field. The Office also supports authorities in their efforts to improve electoral processes and to follow up on recommendations made by ODIHR election monitoring missions, by reviewing election-related legislation, providing technical expertise, and

supporting the activities of citizen observer groups.

The Mission advocates for the full implementation of ODIHR recommendations and works with authorities to create the required preconditions for this.

The latest ODIHR report on BiH elections is available on [osce.org/odihr](https://www.osce.org/odihr) website and at this link¹.

Reforming electoral legislation

A comprehensive review of electoral legislation, conducted in an inclusive and transparent political process, is a top priority for the OSCE Mission to BiH. The urgent need for comprehensive electoral reform and the full implementation of ODIHR recommendations has also been underlined in European Commission's Opinion on the EU membership application of BiH.

Unfortunately, electoral reform has been pending for many years. As a consequence, many citizens have limited trust in elections and urgent improvements are needed to strengthen the integrity and security of the electoral process. The OSCE Mission to BiH continuously invests efforts to get this reform process moving, in line with ODIHR's reports and recommendations.

The OSCE Mission to BiH has been advocating for the re-establishment of the Inter-Agency Working Group on the Amendment of the BiH Election Law and the Law on Political Party Financing (IAWG). The Mission previously supported the work of the IAWG, which was composed of members of parliament alongside representatives of the Council of Ministers and the Central Election Commission.

¹ Available at <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bih/409905>.

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